

**Soldiers**  
*Online*



# Recreating the

Movie magic recreates the horror of Japanese planes attacking Pearl Harbor's Battleship Row.





# Day of Infamy

Story by Heike Hasenauer  
Photos by Andrew Cooper





**T**HE weeks before Easter 2000 were warm and lazy for tourists visiting Waikiki Beach and other attractions on Oahu, Hawaii's most populated island.

On the set of the movie "Pearl Harbor," however, the word was "action."

Replica Japanese Aichi D3A1 dive bombers and "Zero" fighters swooped low through black special-effects smoke as they maneuvered from ground level to 1,500 feet over the harbor and nearby airfields, sparking pyrotechnic explosions and sending

people on the ground rushing for cover.

From the highways, residents and tourists occasionally caught glimpses of the massive orange-black fireballs that filled the sky as production crews shot "bombing" sequences to recreate the Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese attack that disabled or sank 18 U.S. vessels.

At Wheeler Army Air Field, more than 120 soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division Aviation Brigade played extras in the film, said LTC Jeff Kappenman, commander of the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment. Among them were CH-47 Chinook

crew chiefs SPC Gilbert Serrano and SGT John Strizak, who raced for cover as the "Japanese" fighters soared over the airstrip within a few feet of the tarmac.

Earlier, Strizak had been aboard the battleship USS *Missouri* — now retired and on permanent display — during filming of a boxing match between Academy Award-winning actor Cuba Gooding Jr. and another actor.

Chinook crew chief SGT William Duncan took a week's leave to play a pilot in the movie, although he doesn't actually fly in the film. And SFC





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**One of the film's most powerful scenes shows the sinking of the crippled battle-ship USS *Oklahoma*.**

Kenneth Gant, who's assigned to the 68th Medical Company, drove a World War II-era ambulance on the set.

SGT Ross Sweat, a light-wheeled-vehicle mechanic, spent half a day running about 100 yards, 25 times, he said. "It's very tiring doing the same thing over and over again. But it's interesting to see how it all comes together."

"The Disney production crew calls you a few hours before they need you someplace," Sweat said. "Most of the extras don't know ahead of time what they'll be doing. We just show up and



**Actress Kate Beckinsale, who plays nurse Evelyn Johnson, directs corpsmen carrying wounded sailors after the attack.**



**Ben Affleck plays Rafe McCawley, whose character is loosely based on a real-life Army Air Corps pilot of the time.**

Disney's wardrobe crew dresses us, adds a little makeup and clips our hair."

The movie, to be released on Memorial Day, is not so much a historic epic as it is a love story set against the backdrop of Pearl Harbor, said Jerry Bruckheimer, the film's producer. Directed by Michael Bay,

who also directed "Armageddon" and "The Rock," "Pearl Harbor" stars Ben Affleck as Rafe McCawley and Josh Hartnett as Danny Walker, characters loosely based on real-life Army Air Corps pilots of the time, 2LTs Ken Taylor and George Welch.





Taylor and Welch, who got their P-40s into the air during the actual attack, together shot down six Japanese fighters.

The movie also stars Alec Baldwin, Tom Sizemore, John Voigt, Kate Beckinsale, Mike Shannon, William Scott and Ewen Bremner.

As the film opens, a very short scene shows the two main characters as young boys growing up in Tennessee, said Defense Department historian Jack Green of the Naval Historical Center in Washington, D.C.

The story then moves to Mitchell Field, N.Y., where the former crop dusters are P-40 pilots. A love triangle emerges as Danny, Rafe and Evelyn Johnson, played by Beckinsale, all eventually ship out to Pearl Harbor.

The Defense Department's motion-picture liaison offices, among them the Army liaison office within the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs' Los Angeles Branch, played a critical role in making the film, said Bruckheimer.

"It's a huge project, a massive effort. Without the Army, we couldn't have done it. The soldiers have been as important as our actors and film crew," he said.



**Nurses, including Kate Beckinsale (in white) arrive at Pearl Harbor for the first time.**

Located on the outskirts of Hollywood, Calif., the Army's film liaison office assists the television and film industries with productions of military-related films, TV programs and documentaries to ensure they're as accurate as possible, said L.A. Branch

spokeswoman Kathy Ross.

Its personnel do everything from answering simple Army-related questions to reviewing scripts, recommending changes, helping locate props and providing technical advice. On the film set, they serve as liaison between





the production crew and Army officials whose installations, soldiers and equipment are used during filming.

The Army was chiefly involved in filming at Wheeler AAF, near Schofield Barracks, and at Fort Shafter, headquarters for U.S. Army Pacific Command.

"For logistical reasons, a big part of Wheeler AAF was recreated and filmed on Ford Island, a Navy installation," said MAJ Ben Frazier, the Army's liaison to the film industry at the time of filming.

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**Josh Hartnett (at left), who portrays Army Air Corps pilot Danny Walker, and Ben Affleck stand at ease as they receive details about a mission from actor Alec Baldwin, who portrays famed aviator then-LTC James Doolittle.**

Bruce Hendricks, Disney's president of production said: "If we actually went to every airfield on the island, it would be a logistical nightmare. So, we recreated various airfields on Ford Island. We built a water tower, fuel depots and Quonset huts, making them as realistic as possible."

Low-level flying sequences were filmed at Wheeler, where three Zeroes chased one P-40. Later, studio special effects experts digitally "cloned" the aircraft to create fantastic aerial dogfights and chase scenes involving hundreds of planes, Hendricks explained.

Former Army aviator COL James Gavin piloted a torpedo bomber in the film. A member of the Screen Actors' Guild and the Motion Picture Pilots' Association, he flies vintage aircraft on a regular basis. So does Steve Hinman, a civilian pilot who flies Affleck's P-40 in the film.

Aircraft used in filming include authentic P-40 Tomahawks, Zeroes and the B-25 Mitchell that took off

## L.A. Branch

THE Los Angeles Branch of the Office of the Chief of Information was established in February 1952. Since then, it has supported the making of at least 80 films, television movies and miniseries and provided limited courtesy assistance on numerous others, said L.A. Branch spokeswoman Kathy Ross.

Among the most challenging films to support were "The Longest Day" and "MacArthur," Ross said. For the former, the production company requested 5,000 extras for the recreation of the landings at Normandy. But due to the Berlin Wall crisis and political concerns the office was able to provide only 250 American soldier-extras. One thousand French soldiers dressed in American uniforms were also used.

More recent projects supported by the L.A. Branch include: "Stripes," "Firebirds," "In the Army Now," "Clear and Present Danger" and "Renaissance Man."

For "Clear and Present danger," AH-64 Apache helicopters had to be taken into Mexico at a time of great unrest due to the Chiapas Indian revolt, Ross said.

The L.A. Branch has supported TV series including "Sgt. Bilko," "Combat," "Tour of Duty," and "China Beach," and more recently provided historical and technical information for the HBO series "Band of Brothers," Ross said.

"OCPA-LA is also the Army's liaison for some 80 documentaries annually," Ross said.

Even before the L.A. Branch was established, the Army supported the entertainment industry in its making of the silent movies "Elopement" and "Military Air Scout," both in 1911, Ross said. The first major production supported by the Army was "The Big Parade," a 1925 silent movie about World War I. — Heike Hasenauer

from the aircraft carrier USS *Hornet* in the famous Doolittle raid on Tokyo, and replica torpedo and dive bombers. The aircraft belong to the Santa Monica Museum of Flight and the Planes of Fame museum, both in California, said Gavin.

The \$135 million film project



Heike Hasenauer

**A 25th Infantry Division soldier, an extra in the film, gets a last-minute touch-up from a member of the makeup crew.**

incorporates “advanced technology and computer graphics,” Green said. “A 20-minute sequence of the attack on Pearl Harbor will show the heroics of the people who were there, the tragedies and the carnage,” added executive producer Barry Waldman.

The film crew even constructed “a very large-scale part of the USS *Oklahoma*, which capsizes,” Green said. “They built it so they could cut through it to ‘save’ sailors.”

Despite the props, the special effects and the breathtaking landscapes of Oahu, “we wouldn’t be making this movie without the support of all the services,” said Hendricks. “This is by far the largest production involving all the services.”

Frazier, who earlier worked on the film “*Deep Impact*,” and on “*Cut-away*,” a movie featuring the Army’s Golden Knights parachute team, got involved in “*Pearl Harbor*” in June 1999, when the Army first met with the

film’s scriptwriter.

“Hundreds of changes were made to the script, many of them during filming,” Frazier said. Most were made to correct unbelievable phraseology.

“In 1941, a nurse probably wouldn’t have said as she’s coming out of church, ‘God, church makes me horny,’” Frazier said. “So we changed that, for example.”

Things constantly change, Frazier said. “One day, the director wants to have his planes fly down the airfield. Next day, he might want them to take off from a different location. So we have to coordinate with the units whose aircraft are parked there, to get them out of the scene.”

When the production team requested modern-day lampposts be replaced by period posts, Frazier called post engineers to get the work done. And when they wanted to blow up a historic fountain at Fort Shafter, he secured approval for them to blow up a false fountain built over the real one.

It was Frazier’s job, too, to ensure Disney reimbursed the Army for expenses, including the \$19.68 each, per day, for 13 two-and-a-half-ton trucks loaned to the film crew by the Hawaii National Guard for “set dressing,” and the cost of overtime for civilian personnel.

Personnel from the 25th Inf. Div.’s Public Affairs Office provided

additional support to the film by helping Frazier coordinate the crews’ wishes — among them keeping the media off the film sets and diverting traffic away from roads that would be crossed by very low-flying, vintage aircraft.

“One of the biggest ways we helped was by providing the cadre and training facility to put the actors through a mini-boot camp at Schofield Barracks,” said division public affairs officer MAJ Stanley Heath.

“For four days, they lived the life of a recruit, scrubbing urinals, pulling fireguard and standing inspection,” he said. The training isn’t part of the film, but was done primarily to give the actors a real taste of Army life.

CPT Shawn Powers, flight operations officer for the 3rd Sqdn., 4th Cav., and a handful of other 25th Inf. Div. soldiers underwent the training with Affleck and five other actors, “just so we’d be there if the actors had questions or concerns,” Powers said.

SFC Paul Donnelly, operations sergeant at the Air Assault School at Schofield Barracks and a drill sergeant at Fort Jackson, S.C., from 1990 to 1993, was their drill sergeant for four days.

“I wanted to challenge them,” Donnelly said. “I treated them as I would any other recruit, trying to instill esprit de corps, an understanding of why we serve and things as simple as a proper hand salute.”

Heike Hasenauer



**A member of the film crew looks on as a soldier-extra gets an up-close view of one of the many period automobiles gathered for use in the film.**





**A P-40 fighter roars over flaming “wreckage” at Wheeler Army Air Field as members of the film crew look on.** Heike Hasenauer

Their “entry” into the Army began with a reception-battalion-type event at Ford Island, where the actors took the oath of enlistment and were issued uniforms.

At Schofield, they lived in an open bay with 20 bunks and got up at 5 every morning to do calisthenics and run four miles. “On the first day at ‘boot camp,’ we had a shakedown inspection. One of them had a camera we had to confiscate,” Donnelly said.

The actors wore uniforms of the era, crawled through mud at the obstacle course, ate MREs and mess-hall chow, and received familiarization training with the M-1903 rifle used at the time, Donnelly said. They also got eight hours of aeronautical instruction from a few retired aviators.

Donnelly said, “If the movie’s done well, it will be a tribute to our World War II veterans, including my dad, 85-year-old John J. Donnelly.”

Moviegoers may note small historical inaccuracies in the film. “We’ve discussed them,” Frazier said, “and Disney chose not to correct them. Among them are the crew-neck T-shirts worn by stuntmen for safety reasons. They weren’t invented until later.”

Also, two of the main characters go to New York City and see the Queen Mary docked in New York Harbor. The ship wouldn’t have been at the port at the time you’re supposed to believe it is, Frazier said. And some of the jeeps you’ll see in the film weren’t in Hawaii in 1940, nor were some versions of the aircraft used in filming.

Green said P-40Bs and Cs were on the island during the Pearl Harbor

*For four days, the actors lived the life of a recruit, scrubbing urinals, pulling fireguard and standing inspection. The training isn’t part of the film, but was done primarily to give the actors a real taste of Army life.*

attack. “But there’s only one P-40B remaining in flyable condition anywhere in the world. It was pulled out of the Soviet Union a few years ago, where it was kept under a U.S.-Russia lend-lease agreement.

“Used in the film are P-40Es that were just off the assembly line at the time but not yet in Hawaii; and the P-40Ns, which came out in 1943,” Green explained.

“The Disney crew has been very receptive to our ideas,” Green added. “But while the director has done a considerable amount of research, he wants the movie to be his vision.

“The tremendously popular film ‘Saving Private Ryan’ sparked a renewed public interest in World War II,” Green said. “My organization got many phone calls from ‘baby boomers’ who had seen it. They said, ‘My dad told me what he did in the war, but I didn’t listen. Can you help me find out?’

“This film is a year 2000 view of World War II,” Green continued. “But any World War II picture is going to have a ready audience.” □





After the actual Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, a soldier looks over the gutted remains of a P-40 at Wheeler Field.

# Pearl Harbor: The Real

Story by Heike Hasenauer

THE golden sun sparkling on the Pacific Ocean heralded a new day — Sunday, Dec. 7, 1941 — on the tropical paradise of Oahu, Hawaii.

Many of the 43,000 soldiers stationed there — among them 35,000 men of the 24th and 25th Infantry divisions, and some 8,000 Army Air Corps personnel at Hickam, Wheeler and Bellows fields — slept in.

LTG Walter C. Short, commander of the Hawaiian Div., had given his troops a weekend off as reward for a successful training exercise a week earlier.

At Pearl Harbor, many sailors aboard the vessels moored along

Battleship Row and the piers at Ford Island Naval Air Station also slept in. They'd been up late the night before for the U.S. Pacific Fleet band competition.

Two-hundred and twenty miles north of Oahu, 352 warplanes of the Imperial Japanese Navy readied for takeoff. It was 6 a.m.

Rising to a chorus of cheers, squadrons of torpedo, dive and horizontal bombers and escorting fighters roared from the decks of six aircraft carriers and headed south to carry out one of the most effective — and devastating — surprise attacks of all time. The tremendous blow to U.S.

forces in the Pacific would draw America into World War II.

At 7:55 a.m., the wail of sirens and the thunder of explosions echoed across Oahu. Black smoke rose from Honolulu's harbor. For two hours, the tropic paradise became hell on earth.

The relentless bombing and strafing of the fleet anchored at Pearl Harbor and Ford Island disabled or sank 18 vessels, among them eight battleships.

Hit in its magazines by a 1,600-pound armor-piercing bomb, the battleship USS *Arizona* exploded, burned and sank in nine minutes with 1,177 men aboard. The USS *Oklahoma*



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**A Japanese torpedo bomber heads back to its carrier after the attack.**

15,000 feet, the dive bombers split and attacked from the east and west. As soon as the fighters saw that they had taken the base by surprise they joined the dive bombers in high-speed, low-level strafing runs," Higa said.

Thirty-three Americans died at Wheeler, 75 were wounded and nearly half of the P-40 fighters on the ground were destroyed, he said.

Shortly after the first bombs fell at Wheeler, 2LTs Ken Taylor and George Welch radioed Haleiwa Field, 10 miles to the north, to learn that the field had not yet been attacked. They raced Taylor's Buick from Wheeler to Haleiwa, jumped into their P-40 fighters and together shot down six Japanese fighters: Welch got four; Taylor, two.

A dozen U.S. planes managed to get off the ground before the attack was over, and the U.S. pilots boasted 10 confirmed aerial kills, Higa said.

Taylor, today a retired brigadier general living in Anchorage, Alaska, said officers and enlisted personnel at Wheeler Field "cared for casualties, battled fires, dragged equipment and supplies from burning hangars, and towed undamaged planes to shelter."

At about the same time, in the first attack on

Hickam, 50 dive bombers and fighters hit the Hawaiian Air Depot's engineering building and the parking ramps, where A-20, B-17 and B-18 bombers were sitting ducks, parked wing tip to wing tip as a precaution against potential saboteurs among the island's 160,000 inhabitants of Japanese ancestry.

Bunching the aircraft together cut down on the number of personnel needed to guard them, Higa explained. Unfortunately, the practice cost the Army 76 planes, primarily P-36 and P-40 fighters.

Hickam's brand-new, 3,200-man consolidated barracks, then the largest in the Army Air Forces, took several

also sank, entombing more than 400 men.

But the devastation wasn't confined to the U.S. Pacific Fleet or Pearl Harbor. Some of the Japanese planes struck the Army garrison at Schofield Barracks, where the headquarters of the 24th Inf. Div. was located, and attacked Hickam, Wheeler, Ewa and Bellows fields.

"The Japanese struck the flight line and hangar areas at Wheeler and in between the two hangars where a tent city was filled with people," said Hickam Air Force Base historian Lincoln Higa.

"While the fighters stayed above



**Of 99 P-40Bs and P-40Cs on Oahu, 72 were damaged or destroyed during the attack.**





**The USS California burns after the attack.**

direct hits that killed most of the men on the top floor. And, in the 1,000-man mess hall located in the center of the barracks, 35 men died while eating breakfast.

Retired Air Force Col. Leslie Bratton was stationed at Hickam at the time and remembers hearing explosions and looking out the windows to see the air depot on fire.

"I got into my flight suit and ran toward the hangars as three planes with the great big rising sun loomed overhead," said Bratton, who was a B-17 pilot with the 31st Bombardment Squadron.

"People think there was so much confusion that we didn't do anything," Bratton said. "But we did what we could.

"Within 30 minutes after the first attack, by the time I got to the hangars, everybody was doing what they were supposed to do," Bratton recalled. "I didn't see anyone running around with their hands on their heads screaming."

Some 166 civilian employees reported to Hickam in response to radio appeals to help clear runways, tend to the wounded and help fight fires.

Then-PFC Ray Perry was a driver for the Director of Food Control at Fort Shafter but was at Fort Armstrong across the entrance to Honolulu Harbor when the Army's antiaircraft artillery shells started pummeling the enemy.

"Five drivers, an NCO and I drove

to Hickam to transport the wounded to Tripler General Hospital," Perry recalled. "The traffic was so thick that we got permission to drive on the railroad tracks. At Hickam, we parked between two hangars and placed a white sheet with a red cross on it over the vehicles. The Japanese bombed us anyway," he said.

"Despite the falling bombs and explosions everywhere, we were able to load 17 men onto our vehicles," he said. But before the strafing ended, most of the rescue vehicles had caught fire and exploded, and only two of the wounded were still alive.

Former Army nurse MAJ Annie Fox, who was in charge of casualties at Hickam Field, was later cited for bravery. As the bombs fell, she rushed across the airfield numerous times to care for and help evacuate the wounded.

At Bellows, where members of Wheeler's 44th Pursuit Squadron were detached for gunnery training, men rushed out of their tents toward their P-40s. Two pilots were killed before they got off the ground, and a third was shot out of the air and crashed into the ocean but swam ashore, Higa said.

In mid-attack, 12 B-17 bombers arrived from California to refuel en route to the Philippines. As they approached Hickam Field, what from a distance appeared to be an Army Air Forces welcoming party quickly turned

into a nightmare as Japanese fighters attacked.

Amazingly, although the U.S. planes were unarmed and low on fuel, all but one eventually landed safely at various points on the island. That one,



**Soldiers string concertina wire at a U.S. military installation on Oahu as protection against possible saboteurs.**



severely damaged by the Zeroes, crash landed at Hickam, killing one crewman.

All across the island, soldiers reacted without hesitation. Hastily organized units from the 24th and 25th Inf. divisions secured defensive positions on the north and south sectors of the island, with the 25th defending Pearl Harbor and Honolulu, said Thomas Fairfull, director of the U.S. Army Museum at Fort DeRussy in Honolulu.

“By the second wave of the attack, an hour after the first one, gun emplacements were set up everywhere,” Fairfull said. “At Hickam, one man lugged a machine gun to the roof of a hangar. Another climbed into a parked B-18, mounted a .30-cal. machine gun in the nose and kept firing at the enemy until his aircraft was hit and consumed by fire.”

In the second attack, 169 Japanese fighters and bombers pounded Pearl Harbor and the airfields, this time targeting the naval air station at Kaneohe and the Army’s Haleiwa Field, Fairfull said.

At Hickam, Wheeler and Bellows, 240 soldiers died and some 450 were wounded, said Higa. Thirty-nine civilians died at Hickam, and in downtown Honolulu 68 civilians were killed and 35 were wounded.

Altogether, 2,403 U.S. service members were killed, 1,178 were wounded, 188 aircraft were destroyed and 151 were damaged.

By comparison, the Japanese lost 64 men, five torpedo bombers, 15 dive bombers, nine fighters and all five of the “secret-weapon” midget submarines that were to sneak into Pearl Harbor and help eliminate the fleet before returning to individual mother submarines for the return voyage to Japan.

None of the subs accomplished its mission, however. And one sub commander, whose vessel ran aground, became the first of two Japanese prisoners of war taken in the Pearl Harbor attack. His captor was then-Hawaii National Guard MSG David Akui.

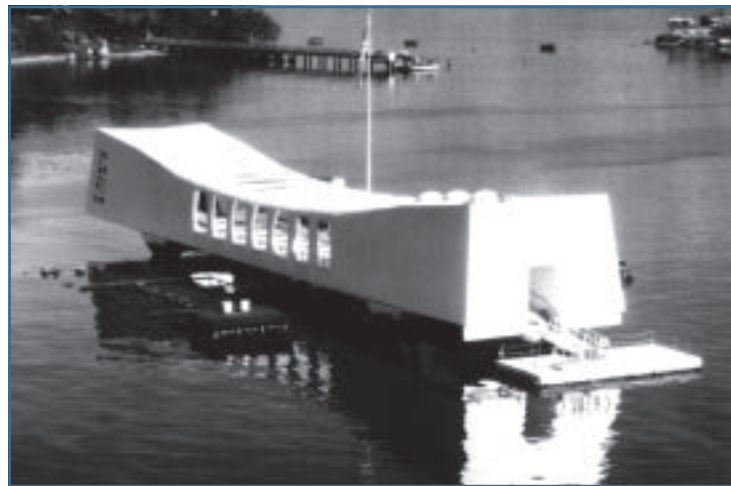
The other POW was the pilot of a crippled aircraft who landed on the outlying island of Niihau.

By noon on Dec. 7, when the skies quieted and the smoke of burning wreckage dissipated, Hawaii’s territo-



More than 1,000 men went to the bottom with the crippled USS Arizona.

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The USS Arizona Memorial — built above the sunken battleship — draws thousands of visitors annually.

rial governor, with the approval of President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Short, declared martial law.

The military moved into Iolani Palace in Honolulu and assumed all power. General Orders regulated everything from traffic to garbage collection. There were blackouts, curfews, food and gas rationing, and news and mail censorship, Fairfull said.

By Christmas, U.S. government civilians and military dependents had been evacuated to the mainland. Many

native Hawaiians fled to the fields and farmlands, and bomb shelters were dug all over the island.

In the months that followed, Army, Navy and Marine Corps pilots flew regular patrols, searching for enemy aircraft and submarines, and troops occupied defensive sectors, barb-wired potential landing beaches and camouflaged key buildings.

And in the next few years, from December 1941 to June 1945, Army strength in Hawaii swelled from 43,000 to 250,000 troops. □